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MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REPORT, FISCAL YEAR 1932

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

TRANSMITTING

REPORT OF THE MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1932

DECEMBER 6, 1932.—Referred to the Committee on Agriculture and ordered to be
printed

MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION,
Washington, D. C., December 2, 1932.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR: In accordance with the provisions of section 3 of the act of Congress approved February 18, 1929 (45 Stat. 1222; U. S. Code, Suppl., ch. 7a), I present herewith report of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1932.

Respectfully,

ARTHUR M. HYDE,
Secretary of Agriculture,
Chairman Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Arthur M. Hyde (chairman), Secretary of Agriculture.
Roy D. Chapin, Secretary of Commerce.
Ray L. Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior.
Peter Norbeck, Senator from South Dakota.
Harry B. Hawes, Senator from Missouri.
August H. Andresen, Representative from Minnesota.
Sam D. McReynolds, Representative from Tennessee.
Rudolph Dieffenbach (secretary), Bureau of Biological Survey.

REPORT OF MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION, FISCAL YEAR 1932

SUMMARY OF THE YEAR'S WORK

The fiscal year ended June 30, 1932, was one of outstanding importance by reason of accelerated progress in the acquisition of lands, and by indorsement by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission of a bill introduced in Congress authorizing the exchange of lands on refuges acquired and to be acquired. Such exchanges would facilitate the rounding out of refuges and the consolidation of holdings within selected boundaries and thus permit better administration of the areas and protection of birds in the region.

Only one meeting of the commission was held in the fiscal year, but at that session, December 3, 1931, it approved the acquisition of 38,704 acres of land in eight States, increasing by 38 per cent the total acreage authorized for purchase and lease-purchase by the commission. Five new refuge units were created by this action.

Thus, at the close of the fiscal year a total of 139,981 acres had been approved for purchase and lease-purchase, at a total cost of \$612,868.59, or at the average rate of \$4.38 an acre. In addition, the commission approved the leasing of 2,274 acres at Hempstead, N. Y., without the customary option to purchase. Of these lands approved for purchase, 79,793 acres have been conveyed by deed to the United States, payment having been made therefor. Most of the other lands approved are now leased, thus permitting their administration and protection by the Bureau of Biological Survey pending the time when funds become available for consummating the purchase.

Inasmuch as the market value of lands continued to decrease and many landowners were disposed to liquidate their holdings, thus creating a buyer's market such as has not prevailed for years, progress in making desirable purchases was limited only by the funds available. The disposition to sell was especially prevalent in the industrial portions of the United States, on the larger holdings, and on properties that have had large capitalized values by reason of their suitability for hunting. The Government benefited by several of these opportunities.

Investigations conducted by the Biological Survey have shown that several areas owned by the United States will satisfactorily serve as refuges for migratory birds; and during the year six of these areas, containing in all 42,984 acres, have been set aside by Executive orders and proclamations. This brings the total area acquired and placed under the jurisdiction of the Biological Survey since the inception of the migratory bird conservation act to 254,553 acres, constituting 16 refuges in 14 States.

At the end of the year the Biological Survey had examined, appraised, and prepared type maps of 134 units, containing a total of 3,607,594 acres, an average of 26,922 acres per unit. Each of the

48 States contains at least one of these proposed refuges. The total cost for doing this work has amounted to 0.015 cent an acre.

On the average each one of these proposed refuge units includes more than 50 tracts, and in order to consolidate them satisfactorily it is necessary to negotiate with each owner.

Table 1 sets forth the results of the acquisition work of migratory-bird refuge areas to the termination of the fiscal year 1932, including purchases, leases, cessions, gifts, and the reservation of public lands.

TABLE 1.—*Refuge areas acquired and approved for acquisition under the migratory bird conservation act, to June 30, 1932*

State and county	Refuge	Areas approved by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission for purchase and lease-purchase				Other areas acquired	Total
		Ac- quired by pur- chase	Pending title conveyance		Total		
			Under purchase agree- ment	Leased			
		<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>
California: Imperial	Salton Sea		8,982		8,982	¹ 15,732	24,714
Colorado: Alamosa	San Luis Lake		5,180		5,180		5,180
Florida:							
Hernando	Chinsegut Hill					² 2,033	2,033
Jefferson, Taylor, and Wakulla.	St. Marks	19,313			19,313	¹ 16,298	35,611
Maryland: Dorchester	Blackwater			7,652	7,652		7,652
Montana: Cascade and Cho- teau.	Benton Lake					¹ 12,235	12,235
Nebraska: Garden	Crescent Lake	33,128		5,480	38,608	¹ 173	38,781
Nevada: Churchill	Fallon		3,788	9,594	13,382	¹ 14,114	27,496
New York: Nassau	Hempstead					³ 2,274	2,274
North Carolina: Hyde	Swanquarter	5,319	6,663	3,511	15,493		15,493
North Dakota: Burleigh and Kidder.	Long Lake		834	3,582	4,416	¹ 1,130	5,546
Oklahoma: Alfalfa	Salt Plains					¹ 18,684	18,684
South Carolina: Charleston	Cape Romain	22,033	415	2,196	24,644	¹ 30,511	55,155
Utah: Box Elder	L o c c o m o t i v e Springs.					¹ 1,034	1,034
Wyoming:							
Albany	Bamforth Lake			965	965	¹ 201	1,166
Do	Hutton Lake			1,346	1,346	¹ 153	1,499
Total		79,793	25,862	34,326	139,981	114,572	254,553

¹ By Executive order or proclamation.

² By gift.

³ By lease without option to purchase; acquisition approved by the commission.

⁴ By cession.

In the reports of this commission for the fiscal years 1930 and 1931, brief descriptions were given of the refuges (included in Table 1) that had been created during these years.

The refuges described in the report for 1930¹ were the Benton Lake Refuge, Mont., the Salt Plains Refuge, Okla., the San Luis Lake Refuge, Colo., and the Cape Romain Refuge, S. C.

The report for 1931² described the Salton Sea Refuge, Calif., the Fallon Refuge, Nev., the St. Marks Refuge, Fla., the Swanquarter Refuge, N. C., and the Crescent Lake Refuge, Nebr.

¹ Doc. No. 670, 71st Congress, 3d session, Dec. 8, 1930.

² Doc. No. 127, 72d Congress, 1st session, Dec. 8, 1931.

LANDS APPROVED FOR PURCHASE, 1932

At the meeting of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission on December 3, 1931, the Secretary of Agriculture presented the program of proposed acquisitions recommended by the Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey. The commission authorized purchases or leases for establishing the following refuges:

BLACKWATER MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

The commission approved the lease and purchase of 7,652 acres in the Blackwater Migratory Bird Refuge, Dorchester County, Md., a famous concentration point for waterfowl, and considered their most important breeding area on the Atlantic coast south of Labrador. A few additional small tracts will have to be acquired to round out the refuge.

Black ducks, mallards, and pintails are the most numerous species of ducks using this area. The most important shore bird is the Wilson's snipe (jacksnipe), which is found in great numbers during the fall and spring. Yellowlegs and killdeers are present in considerable numbers. Several species of sandpipers and occasionally black-bellied plovers are also seen on the marshes. King rails nest on the refuge and Virginia rails frequent it. On the marginal lands quail and ringnecked pheasants are present in large numbers.

HEMPSTEAD MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

The Hempstead Migratory Bird Refuge, N. Y., on the south shore of Long Island, contains 1,182 acres of marsh land and 1,092 acres of water, which are owned by the town of Hempstead. Protracted negotiations for purchasing it were conducted, but this form of acquisition was not found possible; if it had been, the cost would have far exceeded any sum now available under authorization of the migratory bird conservation act. As a result of the local citizens' interest in wild-life conservation, a lease at a nominal rental is in process of negotiation. Under protection this area should be a valuable contribution to the migratory waterfowl sanctuary system because of its strategic location within a zone at present without a refuge of any kind.

The migratory birds frequenting the refuge are redheads, teals, black ducks, and mallards, and it is reported that teals nest on the area. It is also a favorite resort for yellowlegs, snipe, plovers, bitterns (meadow hens), curlews, and clapper, Virginia, and sora rails. Although duck foods are not abundant within the confines of the unit, it is a favorite resting area for many birds that seek their food elsewhere.

LONG LAKE MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

The surveyed area of Long Lake Migratory Bird Refuge in Burleigh and Kidder Counties, N. Dak., embraces 11,000 acres, practically all in private ownership. In addition, there are 7,696 acres of unsurveyed marsh and water that will automatically be included upon the acquisition of the surveyed lands. The total area is thus 18,696 acres. Nineteen purchase and lease-purchase contracts, for a total

of approximately 4,416 acres, were approved by the commission at its last meeting.

Because of its location and its natural attractions, this area is one of the most valuable refuge sites in North Dakota, although duck sickness there has in the past caused the loss of many birds. The Biological Survey, however, hopes to combat this disease so that such losses may be reduced or eliminated in the future.

Migratory birds found in greatest abundance here, some breeding, are mallards, pintails, shovellers, blue-winged teals, and stilt sandpipers. Other common birds include widgeons, gadwalls, green-winged teals, lesser scaups, American coots, eared grebes, black terns, willets, marbled godwits, yellowlegs, least sandpipers, solitary sandpipers, and avocets. Geese stop here in large numbers during migration.

BAMFORTH LAKE MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE³

Within the Bamforth Lake unit situated in Albany County, Wyo., 965 acres of land were approved for lease-purchase. The total area suitable for wild-life refuge purposes here is 3,318 acres, and to some extent it is supplemented by the Hutton Lake refuge, about 12 miles distant.

Pintails, mallards, teals, redheads, and gadwalls are common on this refuge, and when the investigations were made, there were indications that they nest on the area. Coots (mudhens), avocets, and kill-deers are also abundant.

HUTTON LAKE MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE³

The commission approved for lease-purchase 1,346 acres of land within the Hutton Lake Migratory Bird Refuge, in Albany County, Wyo., about 12 miles south of the Bamforth Lake Refuge. It will be desirable to acquire 307 acres from the State of Wyoming to round out this refuge.

Mallards, redheads, teals, pintails, great blue herons, and night herons are common to this area, and phalaropes, western grebes, bitterns, and black terns were also noted at the time the refuge was examined. Geese visit the area in fall and spring.

LANDS APPROVED FOR ADDITIONS TO REFUGES

At its 1931 meeting, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission also approved further acquisitions of land by purchase or lease for additions to the following refuges:

ST. MARKS MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

The commission approved for purchase 5,330 acres of land for addition to the St. Marks Migratory Bird Refuge, which extends approximately 14 miles along Apalachee Bay, in Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor Counties, Fla. About 1,800 acres remain to be acquired to complete the unit.

³ The Hutton Lake and the Bamforth Lake refuges, though small in extent, are the only places of outstanding importance for migratory-bird refuge purposes in Wyoming.

CRESCENT LAKE MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

Acquisition of 36,920 acres of land in Garden County, Nebr., for the Crescent Lake Migratory Bird Refuge was approved by the commission in 1930. At the 1931 meeting approval was given to the lease and purchase of an additional 1,688 acres to be included in this unit. This acreage embraces part of Blue Lake and practically completes Government ownership of Hackberry Lake. For wild-life purposes these bodies of water and the scattered ponds and potholes are comparable in value to the water areas embraced by previous acquisition, and they substantially enhance the usefulness of the refuge.

FALLON WILD LIFE REFUGE

To complete the Fallon Wild Life Refuge, Churchill County, Nev., the commission approved the purchase and lease purchase of 13,382 acres, to supplement the 14,114 acres of public land set aside for migratory-bird refuge purposes. This refuge is an extensive area of marsh and mud flats, and its wild-fowl food resources are equaled by few other areas in the United States.

SWANQUARTER MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

Three thousand five hundred and eleven acres were approved by the commission for inclusion in the Swanquarter Migratory Bird Refuge, in Hyde County, N. C. These lands form the eastern boundary of the existing extensive refuge, and their acquisition will permit almost complete jurisdiction over the shores of Juniper Bay, a body of water on which migrating wild fowl concentrate in large numbers.

CAPE ROMAIN MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

The one remaining tract of privately owned land within the Cape Romain Migratory Bird Refuge, in Charleston County, S. C., was taken under contract at a fair price and approved for purchase. The 415 acres in this tract bring the total area to 55,155 acres, including the original acquisition, lands owned by the State over which jurisdiction has been ceded to the Federal Government, and a large tide-water area included in the refuge by presidential proclamation.

REFUGES ESTABLISHED OR ENLARGED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER OR PROCLAMATION

LOCOMOTIVE SPRINGS MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

An area of 1,034 acres in Box Elder County, Utah, to be known as the Locomotive Springs Migratory Bird Refuge, was set aside by Executive order on September 29, 1931. It is not a great distance from the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge and may serve as a useful supplement to it. The most abundant species frequenting this area are redheads, cinnamon teals, mallards, shovellers, gadwalls, ruddy ducks, pintails, and green-winged teals.

ST. MARKS MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

An Executive order of October 31, 1931, set aside 101 acres of Government-owned land in Wakulla County, Fla., to be included in the St. Marks Migratory Bird Refuge. By a presidential proclamation of December 24, 1931, the following contiguous water areas were also added to this refuge: 6,224 acres in Jefferson County, 202 acres in Taylor County, and 9,771 acres in Wakulla County. With the 19,313 acres acquired by purchase, these acquisitions bring the St. Marks Refuge area to 35,611 acres.

LONG LAKE MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

An Executive order of February 25, 1932, set aside 290 acres in Kidder County and 840 acres in Burleigh County, N. Dak., to be included in the Long Lake Migratory Bird Refuge.

CAPE ROMAIN MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

In accordance with a presidential proclamation of June 6, 1932, 24,168 acres of tidal water were included in the Cape Romain Migratory Bird Refuge.

BAMFORTH LAKE MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

An Executive order of January 29, 1932, set aside 201 acres of public land for inclusion in the Bamforth Lake Migratory Bird Refuge.

HUTTON LAKE MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

By Executive order of January 28, 1932, 153 acres of public land were set aside for inclusion in the Hutton Lake Migratory Bird Refuge.

REFUGES ACQUIRED BY GIFT

CHINSEGUT HILL MIGRATORY BIRD REFUGE

Chinsegut Hill, a 2,033-acre tract in Hernando County, Fla., has been deeded by the owners, Col. and Mrs. Raymond Robins, to the Department of Agriculture. It overlooks Lake Lindsey, most of which it also includes. The area is interspersed with small lakes and marshes, and a diversity of cover lends additional value to the tract for the conservation of many species of wild life.

RÉSUMÉ

Heretofore the Biological Survey has covered a wide field in its examination and appraisal of lands, but the scope of this work has been greatly curtailed. For the most part investigations are now being conducted on less extensive areas that were at first passed by because of the more pressing need for early determinations on projects considered of major importance.

While the refuges that have up to this time been acquired are outstanding by reason of their natural attractions for migratory birds, investigations made before the acquisitions indicated that much could be done to enhance their value and to increase their usefulness.

So far as the limited funds have permitted, the Biological Survey has therefore been engaged in making plans for engineering works to control better the water supplies, in introducing and propagating aquatic plant life relished by migratory birds, and in studying measures to control the natural enemies of waterfowl.

During the past year accurate cadastral surveys have been made of many refuges and the boundaries adequately and conspicuously posted with monuments and signs, so that the public might be aware of their exact limits and that ignorance of the boundaries defining these inviolate sanctuaries might not be used as an excuse for trespass. During the past year 113,071 acres were so surveyed and the exterior limits permanently monumented, as compared with 53,258 acres during the fiscal year 1931.

EXPENSES OF THE COMMISSION

Of the \$5,000 available for the expenses of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, \$906.56 was expended for travel and subsistence of ex officio members from State game departments, \$333.34 for stenographic services; and \$34.50 for miscellaneous accounts, the whole totaling \$1,274.40.

Of the \$400,000 available to the Biological Survey, \$73,844 was expended for the employment and traveling expenses of personnel engaged on the examination of areas deemed suitable for refuges and for purchase negotiations, title examinations, and topographic, cadastral, and improvement surveys, and map making. Other expenditures covered acquisition of lands, administration of refuges, purchase of equipment, and miscellaneous items.

PURCHASE AND OTHER POLICIES

The migratory bird conservation act provided for an appropriation of \$75,000 for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1930; \$200,000 for the fiscal year 1931; \$600,000 for the fiscal year 1932; and \$1,000,000 for each year thereafter for a period of seven years. The money authorized for the fiscal years 1930 and 1931 was appropriated in accordance with the provisions of the act. The appropriation for the fiscal year 1932 was limited to \$400,000, with the right, however, to enter into contractual obligations to cover the balance of the authorization, namely, \$200,000. The appropriation for the fiscal year 1933 amounted to \$318,000, which includes the \$200,000 made subject to contractual obligations during the previous year. Since the provisions of the migratory bird conservation act authorized an appropriation of \$1,000,000 for the fiscal year 1933, the anticipated program of land acquisition has been seriously curtailed since July 1, 1932. The Bureau of Biological Survey and the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission have attempted to alleviate the effects of this financial stringency, however, by instituting, so far as possible, a program of land leasing with the option to buy the leased tracts in later years. It is contrary to the general policy of the commission to approve leases of lands without the option to buy, and the intention is to exercise such options; otherwise the Federal Government's benefits from the good accomplished under the leases would be merely temporary, and migratory birds attracted to such areas with a sense of security

would later be subject to the vicissitudes prevailing on open areas. There are, however, limits to which the leasing program can go, for generally landowners, preferring to sell rather than lease, desire to consummate within a reasonably short time the conveyance of lands through sale. In most instances, therefore, leases can not be taken for periods in excess of two or three years.

The commission's report for the fiscal year 1931 stated that, since the appropriations authorized are not made available at once, it will be impossible to acquire all the desirable refuges immediately and, therefore, unwise to designate publicly the areas that are under consideration, since lack of funds will postpone for five or more years the acquisition of many units. It seems appropriate to reiterate this policy, because requests are received from time to time by the commission and by the Biological Survey for information with regard to the specific areas that are under consideration for purchase. Furthermore, it is not the commission's policy to approve the acquisition of any lands until after price terms have been reached and options have been properly executed and submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture. It is also deemed wise by the commission to announce that data and maps having to do with the examination and appraisal of proposed refuges are not available to the public.



